



## ***Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks***

Region One  
490 N. Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 752-5501  
FAX: (406) 257-0349  
Ref:DV079-03  
March 14, 2003

To: Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, PO Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Planning, Prevention & Assistance, PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Permitting Compliance, PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901  
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks: Director's Office - Betty Johnson; Parks Division – Walt Timmerman; Legal Unit - Brandi Fisher; Design & Construction – Paul Valle  
Montana Historical Society, SHPO, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's Memorial Building, Helena, 59620  
Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Ave., Helena, 59620-1800  
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624  
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation, PO Box 728, Libby, 59923  
Montana State Parks Association, PO Box 699, Billings, 59103  
Joe Gutkoski, President, Montana River Action Network, 304 N 18<sup>th</sup> Ave., Bozeman, 59715  
Rep. Paul Clark, 20 Fox Lane, Trout Creek, 59874-9510  
Sen. Jim Elliott, 100 Trout Creek Road, Trout Creek, 59874-9609  
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624  
Sanders County Commissioners, PO Box 519, Thompson Falls, 59873  
Brian Burky, Chairman, Sanders Co Park Board, PO Box 519, Thompson Falls, 59873

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Fish, Wildlife & Parks has completed an environmental assessment to grant funds to Sanders County through the local government Boating Improvement Program for the improvement of the Trout Creek boat ramp. The project will provide better, safer, and easier access to Noxon Reservoir, as well as 20 feet of shoreline stabilization. The BASS Club, Trout Creek Community Improvement Association, and Avista Corporation will fund the balance of this project.

There were no changes to the draft EA; therefore, the draft becomes the final EA. A copy of the decision document is enclosed. The final Environmental Assessment may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901. Please direct questions or comments to Marty Watkins, Regional Parks Manager, 490 North Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901, or e-mail to [mawatkins@state.mt.us](mailto:mawatkins@state.mt.us).

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Vincent  
Supervisor

/ni  
Enclosure

# TROUT CREEK BOAT RAMP IMPROVEMENT

## MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

### PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action:** Improve existing boat ramp
2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:**  
Montana Code Annotated 23-1-101
3. **Name of Project:** Trout Creek Boat Ramp Improvement
4. **Name, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency):**  
Sanders County  
P.O. Box 519  
Thompson Falls, MT 59873  
(406) 847-6942
5. **If Applicable:**  
  
**Estimated Construction/Commencement Date:** 3/10/03  
**Estimated Completion Date:** 10/2/03, dependent on water levels  
**Current Status of Project Design:** 50% complete
6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range, and township):** Sanders County, R31W, T24N, Section 17
7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	Acre		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain .....	<u>0</u>
residential .....	<u>0</u>		
industrial .....	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
		irrigated cropland .	<u>0</u>
(b) Open	<u>0</u>	dry cropland .....	<u>0</u>
		forestry .....	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas ...	<u>        </u>	rangeland .....	<u>0.1</u>
		other .....	<u>        </u>
8. **Map/Site Plan: Attach an original 8½" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**
9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project, Including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:** Montana FWP will provide funding of \$12,000 to improve the boat ramp. The Trout Creek Boat Ramp Improvement project will provide better, safer, and easier

access to Noxon Reservoir. The existing concrete logs will be removed, and a new, continuous concrete boat ramp will be constructed. This project will also allow access to the water for bigger boats at most water levels. In conjunction with the boat ramp project, approximately 20' of shoreline stabilization will be done. The BASS Club, Trout Creek Community Improvement Association (TCCIA), and Avista Corp. will fund the balance of this project.

Other improvements completed at this site using other funding in 2002 include a new restroom, dock, picnic tables, sidewalk, bike rack, fire ring, and barbecue. In addition, the parking lot was resurfaced and the old swim dock was redecked with composite material.

**10. Listing of Any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency That Has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits:**

**Agency Name:** Green Mountain Conservation Dist. **Permit:** 310 **Date Filed:** 01/14/03  
**Agency Name:** US Army Corp. of Engineers **Permit:** 404 **Date Filed:** 01/14/03

**(b) Funding:**

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| ▪ MFWP boat-in-lieu funds | Funding Amount: \$12,000                   |
| ▪ Avista Corporation      | Funding Amount: \$10,000                   |
| ▪ BASS Club               | Funding Amount: \$500 + time and equipment |
| ▪ TCCIA                   | Funding Amount: \$500 + time and equipment |

**Maintenance:**

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ▪ Trout Creek Community Improvement Association | *\$3,000/year plus volunteer time |
| ▪ Avista Corporation                            | *\$4,000/year                     |

\*These funds are used for all aspects of site maintenance. The new boat ramp will be periodically inspected and maintained as needed.

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Type of Responsibility</b>
Local Conservation District	310 law, permitting of work on stream bank
US Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404, permitting of work within a wetland

**11. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

MFWP  
 Green Mountain Conservation District  
 USDA Forest Service

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the proposed action, including secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical and human environment.

### A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>⊙</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>⊙</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>⊙</sup>	None	Minor <sup>⊙</sup>	Potentially Significant		
>a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
>c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream, or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other (list)		X				

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT <sup>⊙</sup>				Can Impact Be Mitigated <sup>⊙</sup>	Comment Index
	Unknown <sup>⊙</sup>	None	Minor <sup>⊙</sup>	Potentially Significant		
>a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.)		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
♦e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		N/A				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ⊙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- > Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
>a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?			X		Yes	(a)
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water- related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
♦♦l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		N/A				
♦m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		N/A				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. The cement and rock work will be done in the spring before run off or in the fall after run off. 100% of the rock work (erosion control) will be done out of the water. All cement will be cured prior to placement in the water. Limited turbidity may occur when the concrete slabs are placed in the water. To minimize this we will coordinate this work with a scheduled draw down of the reservoir. In addition, concrete slabs will be placed using a crane rather than slid into place, further reducing turbidity.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- > Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
♦♦f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				
g. Other:		X				

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?		X				
♦♦h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		N/A				
♦i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		N/A				
j. Other:		X				

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.  
 > Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)  
 ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.  
 ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	(8a)
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. The contractor chosen to do this work will have all equipment in good working order and fully maintained. The contractor will be required to submit a spill prevention plan prior to the commencement of work. In addition, the contractor will be required to have a spill kit on-site during the project.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ◆ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ◆◆ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
>e. Define projected revenue sources.	Attached					
>f. Define projected maintenance costs.	Attached					
g. Other:		X				

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista, or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
>c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach tourism report.)			X		N/A	(11c)
♦d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

11c. This project will provide improved access to recreation for the local communities as well as tourists. This site is the most popular boat ramp on Noxon Reservoir and in Sanders County.

- ⚙ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
- > Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- ♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- ♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12a.)		N/A				
e. Other:		X				

### SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole,:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		N/A				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources  
(Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)**

### **1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no-action alternative) to the proposed action, whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider; and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

No Action Alternative: Do not fund the project. Allow boat ramp to remain in its current condition. This will require annual maintenance and gravel applications. The boat ramp will not be accessible to large boats at low water. The current surface will remain uneven and difficult to walk on. Some erosion may continue to occur over time.

### **2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

3a. The cement and rock work will be done in the spring before run off or in the fall after run off. 100% of the rock work (erosion control) will be done out of the water. All cement will be cured prior to placement in the water. Limited turbidity may occur when the concrete slabs are placed in the water. To minimize this we will coordinate this work with a scheduled draw down of the reservoir. In addition, concrete slabs will be placed using a crane rather than slid into place, further reducing turbidity.

8a. The contractor chosen to do this work will have all equipment in good working order and fully maintained. The contractor will be required to submit a spill prevention plan prior to the commencement of work. In addition, the contractor will be required to have a spill kit on site during the project.

11c. This project will provide improved access to recreation for the local communities as well as tourist. This site is the most popular boat ramp on Noxon Reservoir and in Sanders County.

## **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

The boat ramp improvement project will include the replacement of a 2-lane cement log-type ramp with a seamless cement ramp. Currently, the concrete logs form 2 separate ramp lanes. The logs have 3" gaps between them, and there is a 4' gap between the lanes that is unusable.

The new ramp will measure approximately 28' wide by 70' long. It will accommodate 2 lanes of traffic and will be continuous so a camper launching a large boat can be accommodated. The new ramp will be approximately 12' longer than the existing ramp. This will provide access at low water.

- (a) This project will cause minimal and temporary turbidity of the water in the area of construction. The majority of the construction will take place out of the water when reservoir levels are lowest. All activity, including equipment use, will be completed above the water line when possible.

- (b) Use of equipment near and, to a lesser degree, in the water creates a risk of contaminants leaking into the water. As a contract stipulation, the contractor must have all equipment fully maintained and in good condition. In addition, the contractor will have a spill prevention plan and a spill kit on-site.
- (c) The boat ramp improvement project will increase high quality access to Noxon Reservoir. This improved access could provide an increase in tourism and other use of the area.

#### **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:**

This project involves the improvement of an existing boat ramp. No new disturbance or change of land use will occur, so an environmental assessment is the proper level of analysis.

- 2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project, if any; and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

This project was proposed, discussed, and approved at public meetings held by the BASS Club and the Trout Creek Community Improvement Association. The Environmental Assessment will be posted in the legal section of the Sanders County Ledger, and a 30-day comment period will be held. If there is sufficient public interest, a public meeting will be held.

- 2. Duration of comment period, if any:** Thirty days, February 4 through March 6, 2003
- 3. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Brian Burky, Chairman  
Sanders County Park Board  
P.O. Box 519  
Thompson Falls, MT 59873  
Work: (406) 847-2729  
Home: (406) 827-0330